

Public Law 100-343
100th Congress

Joint Resolution

June 22, 1988

[S.J. Res. 249]

Designating June 14, 1988, as "Baltic Freedom Day".

Whereas the people of the Baltic Republics of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia have cherished the principles of religious and political freedom and independence;

Whereas the Baltic Republics have existed as independent, sovereign nations belonging to and fully recognized by the League of Nations;

Whereas the Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics (U.S.S.R.) in collusion with Nazi Germany signed the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact which allowed the U.S.S.R. in 1940 to illegally seize and occupy the Baltic States and by force incorporated them against their national will and contrary to their desire for independence and sovereignty into the U.S.S.R.;

Whereas due to Soviet and Nazi tyranny, by the end of World War II, the Baltic nations had lost 20 per centum of their total population;

Whereas the people of the Baltic Republics have individual and separate culture, national traditions, and languages distinctively foreign to those of Russia;

Whereas the U.S.S.R. since 1940 has systematically implemented its Baltic genocide by deporting native Baltic peoples from their homelands to forced labor and concentration camps in Siberia and elsewhere, and by relocating masses of Russians to the Baltic Republics, thus threatening the Baltic Cultures with extinction through russification;

Whereas the U.S.S.R. has imposed upon the captive people of the Baltic Republics an oppressive political system which has destroyed every vestige of democracy, civil liberties, and religious freedom;

Whereas the people of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia find themselves today subjugated by the U.S.S.R., locked into a union they deplore, denied basic human rights, and persecuted for daring to protest;

Whereas the U.S.S.R. refuses to abide by the Helsinki accords which the U.S.S.R. voluntarily signed;

Whereas the United States stands as a champion of liberty, dedicated to the principles of national self-determination, human rights, and religious freedom, and opposed to oppression and imperialism;

Whereas the United States as a member of the United Nations has repeatedly voted with a majority of that international body to uphold the right of other countries of the world to determine their fates and be free of foreign domination;

Whereas the U.S.S.R. has steadfastly refused to return to the people of the Baltic States of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia the right to exist as independent republics separate and apart from the

U.S.S.R. or permit a return of personal, political and religious freedoms; and

Whereas 1988 marks the forty-eighth anniversary of the United States continued policy of nonrecognition of the illegal forcible occupation of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia by the U.S.S.R.: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That—

(1) the Congress recognizes the continuing desire and right of the people of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia for freedom and independence from the domination of the U.S.S.R.;

(2) the Congress deplores the refusal of the U.S.S.R. to recognize the sovereignty of the Baltic Republics and to yield to their rightful demands for independence from foreign domination and oppression;

(3) the fourteenth day of June 1988, the anniversary of the mass deportation of Baltic peoples from their homelands in 1941, be designated "Baltic Freedom Day" as a symbol of the solidarity of the American people with the aspirations of the enslaved Baltic people; and

(4) the President of the United States be authorized and requested to issue a proclamation for the observance of Baltic Freedom Day with appropriate ceremonies and activities and to submit the issue of the Baltic Republics to the United Nations so that the issue of Baltic self-determination will be brought to the attention of the United Nations General Assembly.

Approved June 22, 1988.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY—S.J. Res. 249:

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, Vol. 134 (1988):

Feb. 26, considered and passed Senate.

June 14, considered and passed House.